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Fig. 1

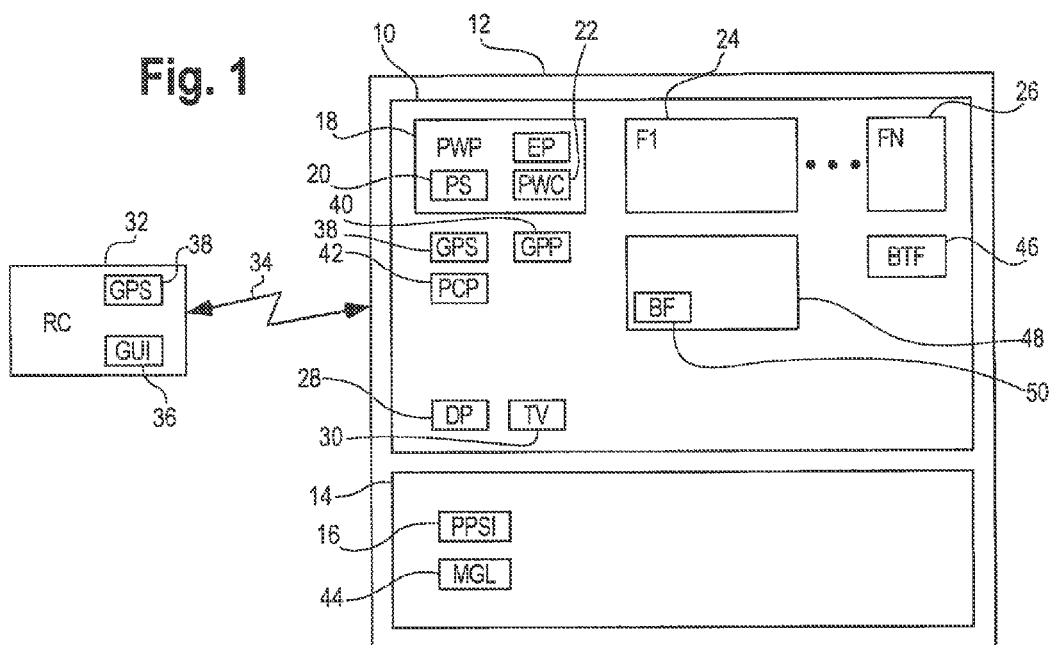


Fig. 2

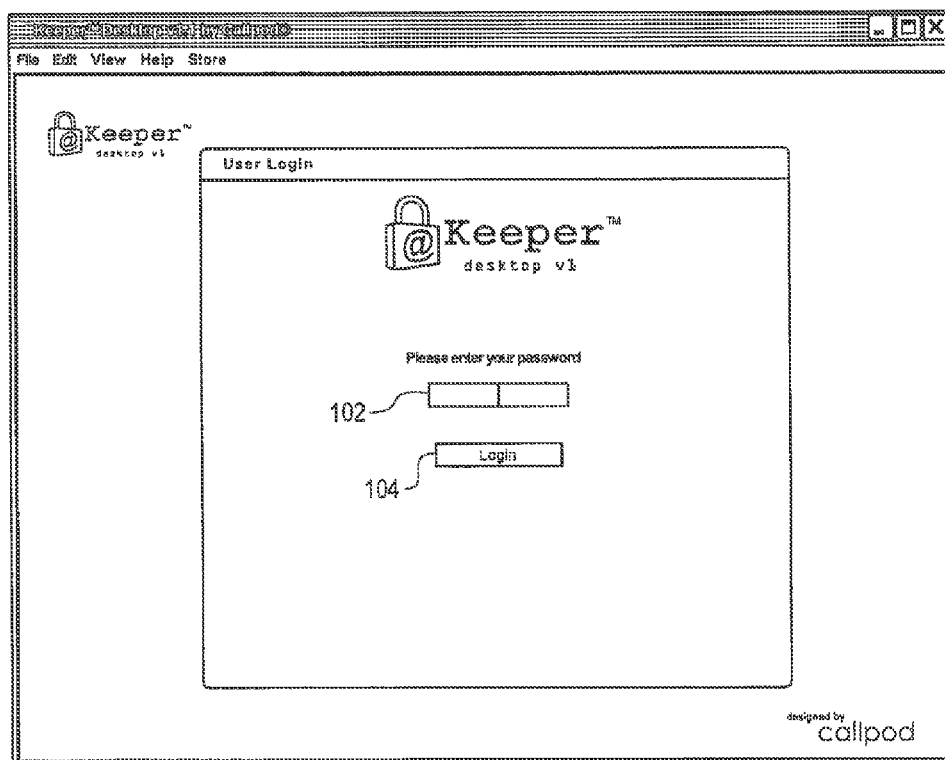


Fig. 3

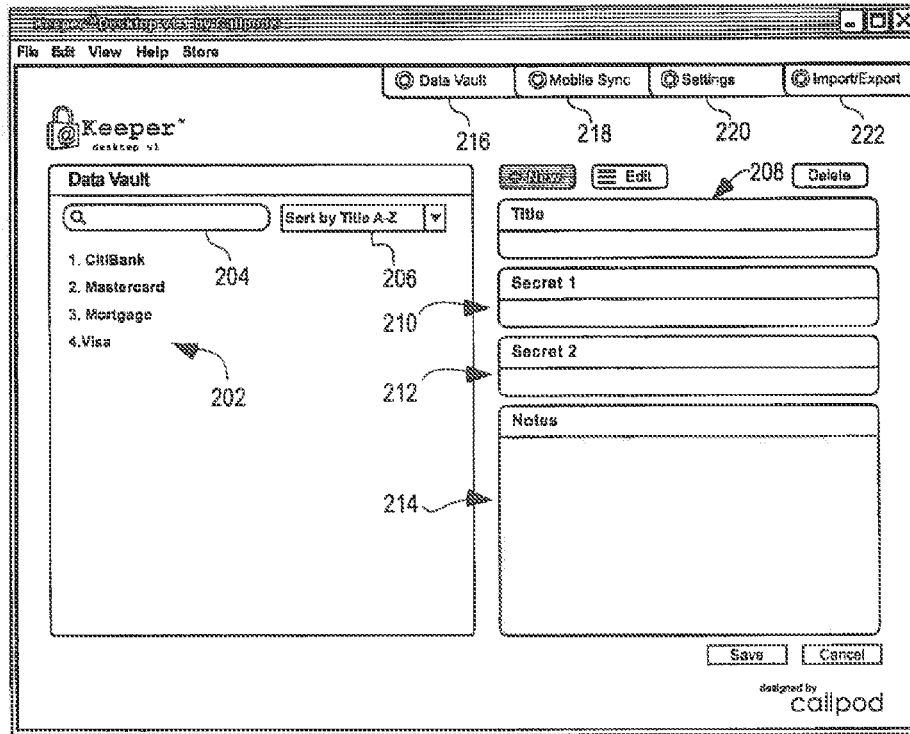


Fig. 4

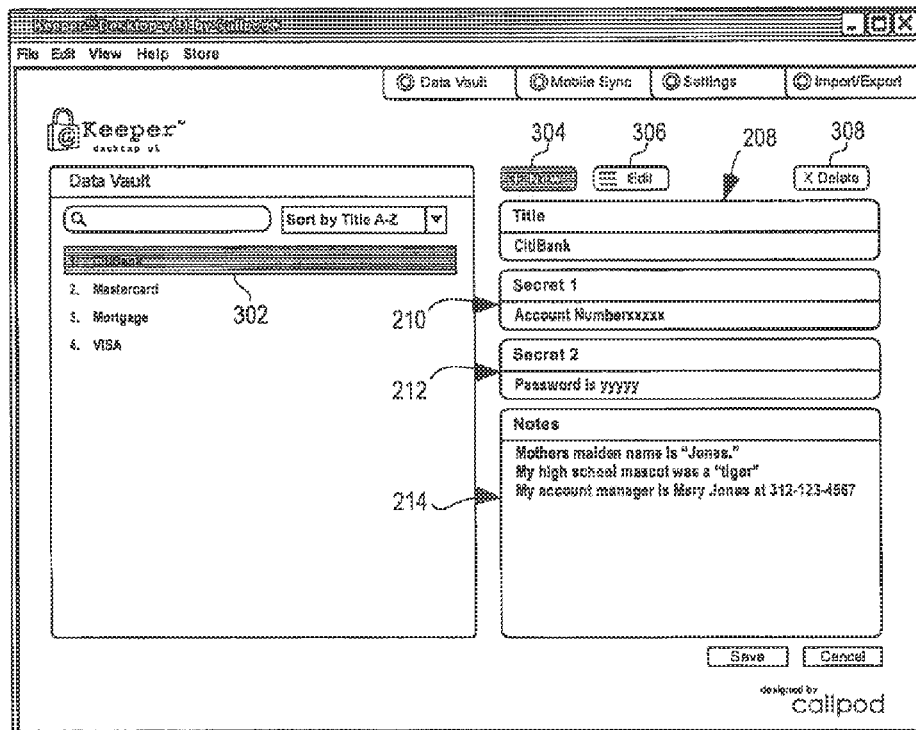
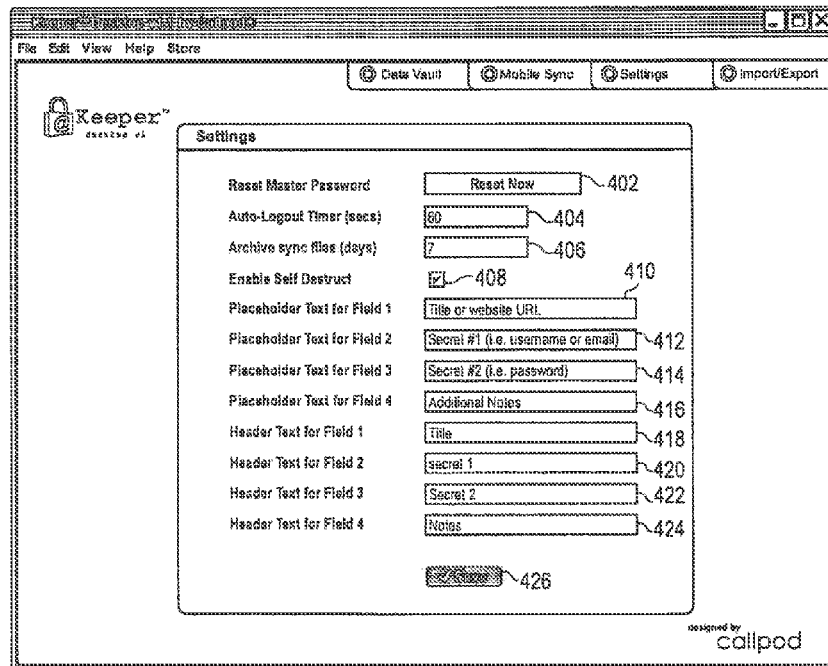
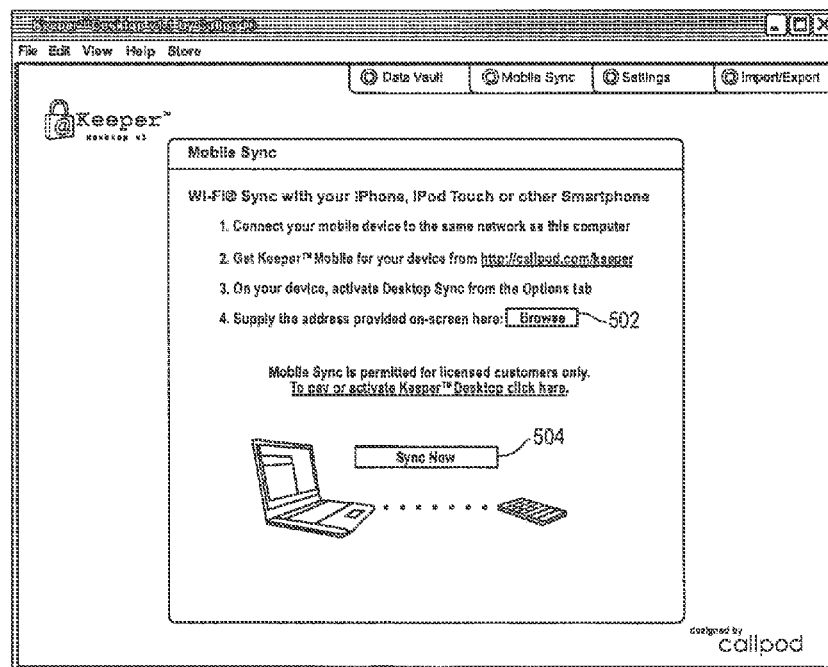


Fig. 5



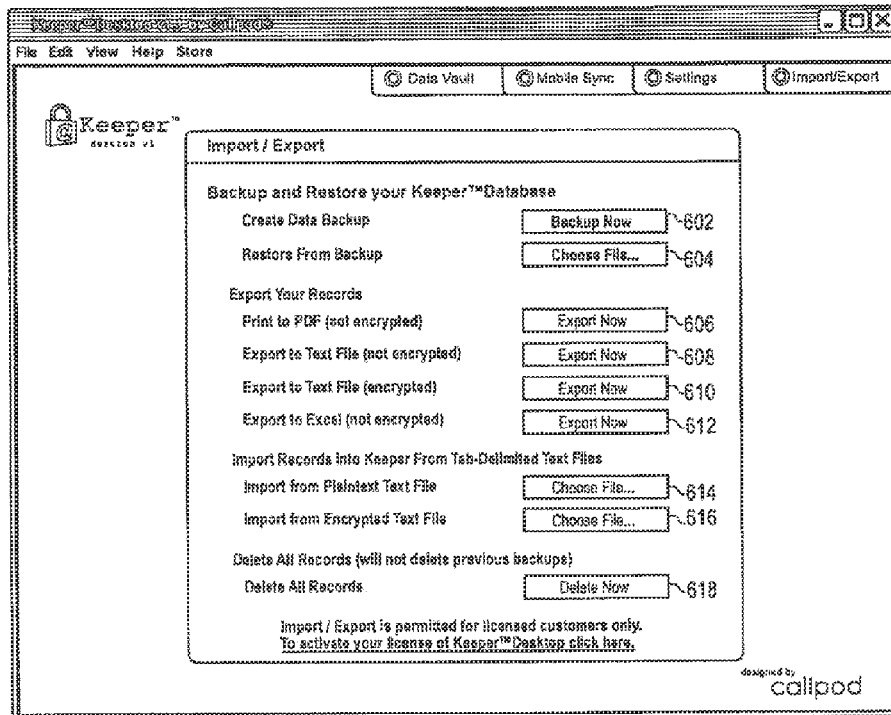
400

Fig. 6



500

Fig. 7



600

Fig. 8

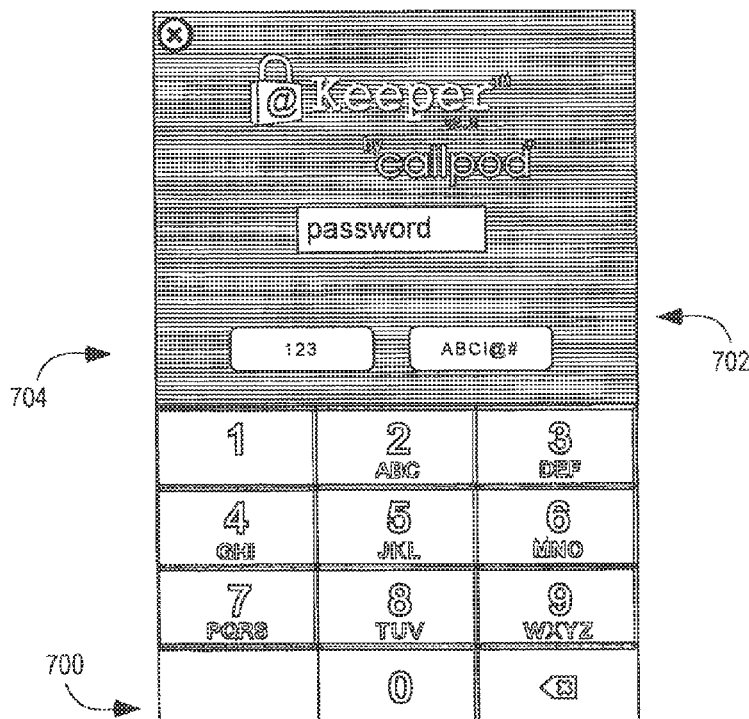


Fig. 9

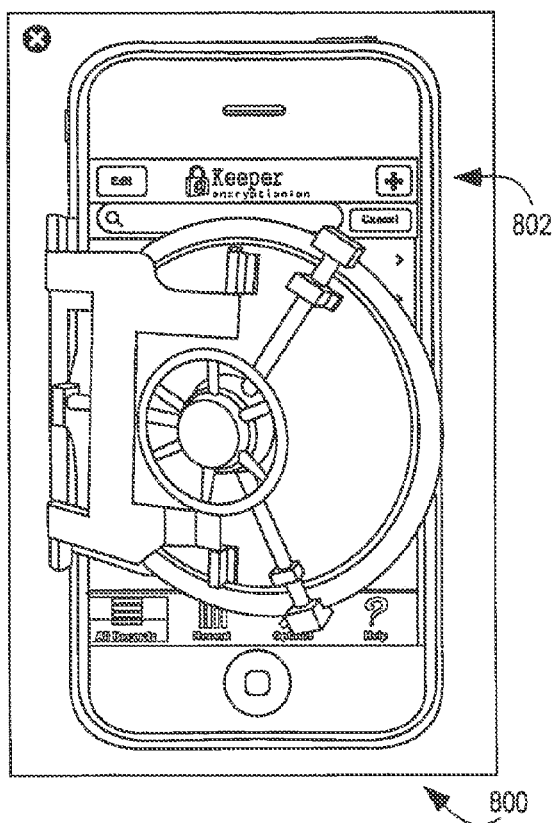


Fig. 10

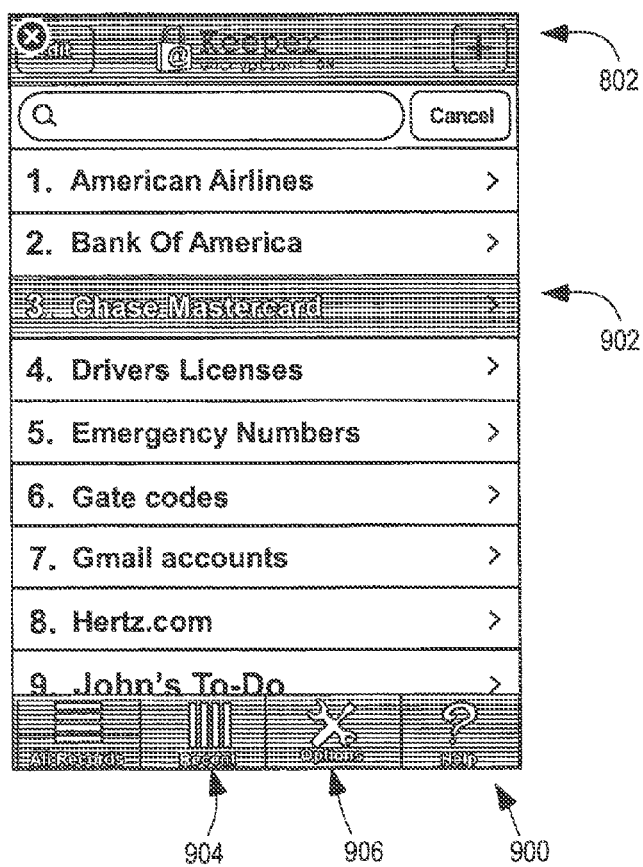


Fig. 11

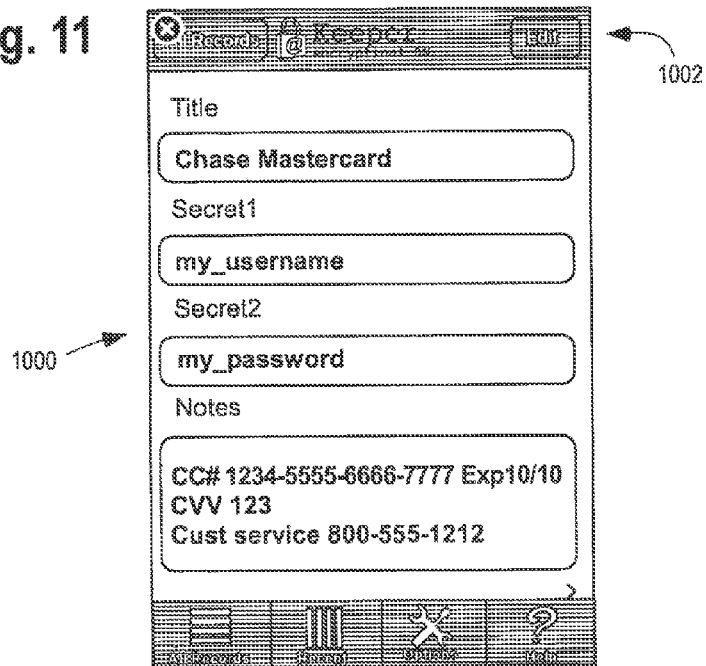


Fig. 12

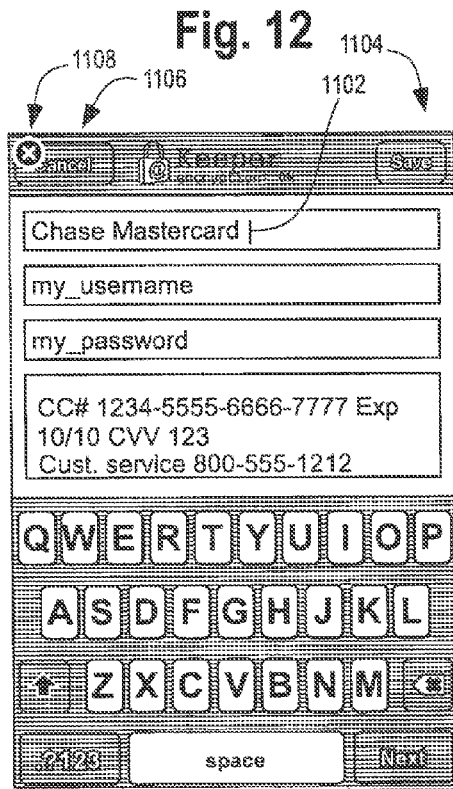


Fig. 13

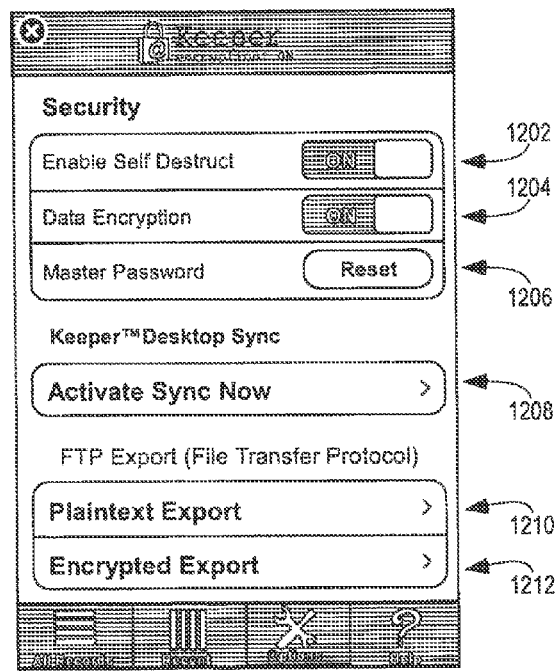


Fig. 14

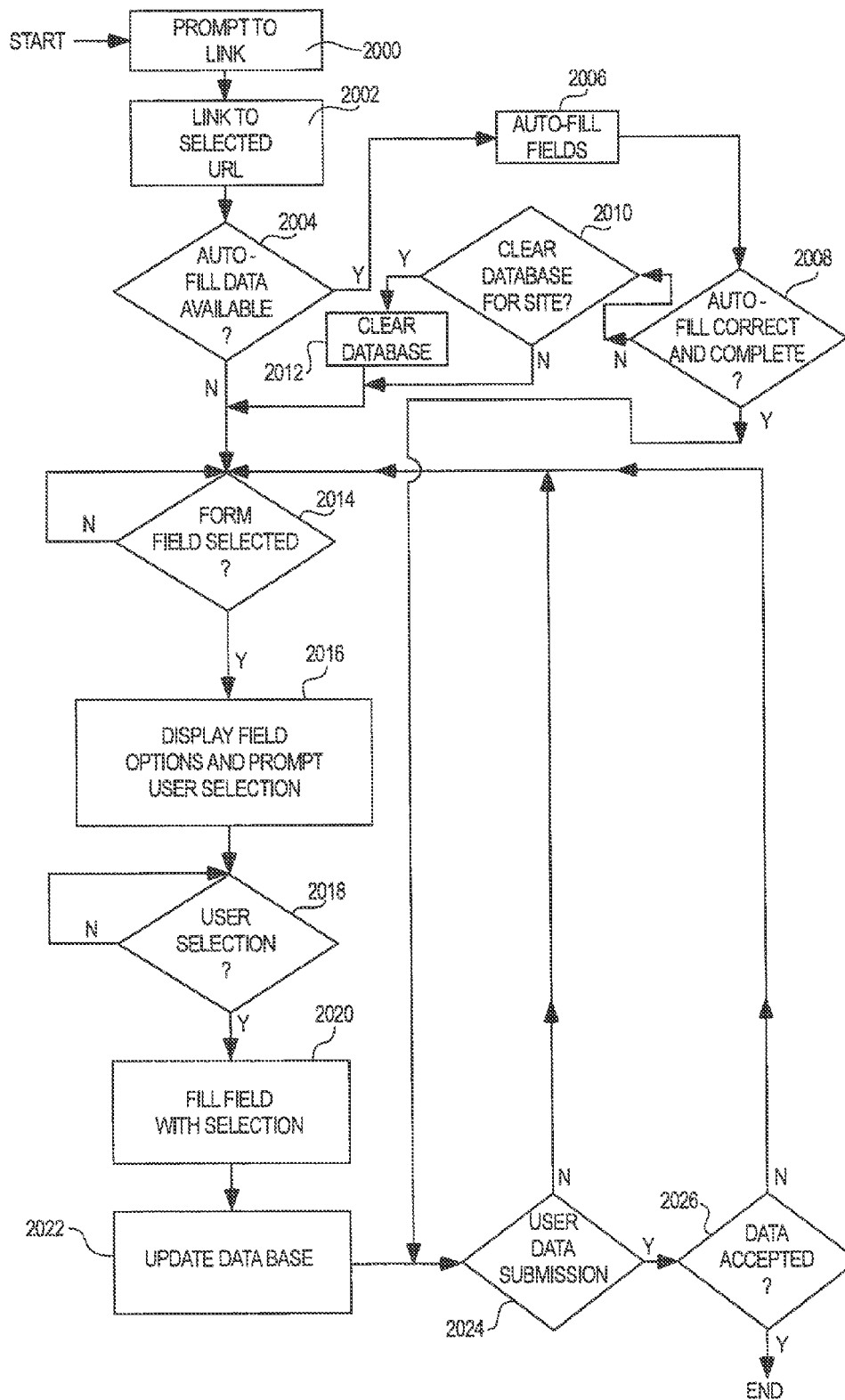


Fig. 14A

Mobile device screen showing a website management interface. The screen displays a status bar at the top with icons for signal, Wi-Fi, and battery, and the time 12:16 PM. Below the status bar are buttons for "New", "Edit", and "Delete". The main content area is titled "Websites" and contains a list of website entries. Each entry has fields for "Name", "Login (username or email)", "Password", and "Login URL". The first entry is for "Amazon" with the login "arlene_lurey@yahoo.com" and password "1234". The login URL is "http://amazon.com". A small icon labeled 2032 is next to the login URL field. At the bottom of the screen is a "Notes" section with a text input field and a "Save" button.

2030

Fig. 14B

Mobile device screen showing a sign-in form. The screen displays a status bar at the top with icons for signal, Wi-Fi, and battery. Below the status bar is a "Sign in" section. The text reads: "To complete your request, please sign in using your e-mail address and existing Amazon password, then click on the 'Sign in' button." Below this is a text input field for the email address, followed by a question: "Do you have an Amazon.com password?". There are two radio button options: "No, I am a new customer." and "Yes, I have a password:". Below the "Yes" option is a text input field for the password. A "Sign in" button is located below the password field. At the bottom of the screen is a "Forgot your password?" link. Below the link is a list of links: "Home", "Cart", "Wish List", and "Your Account", each with a right-pointing arrow.

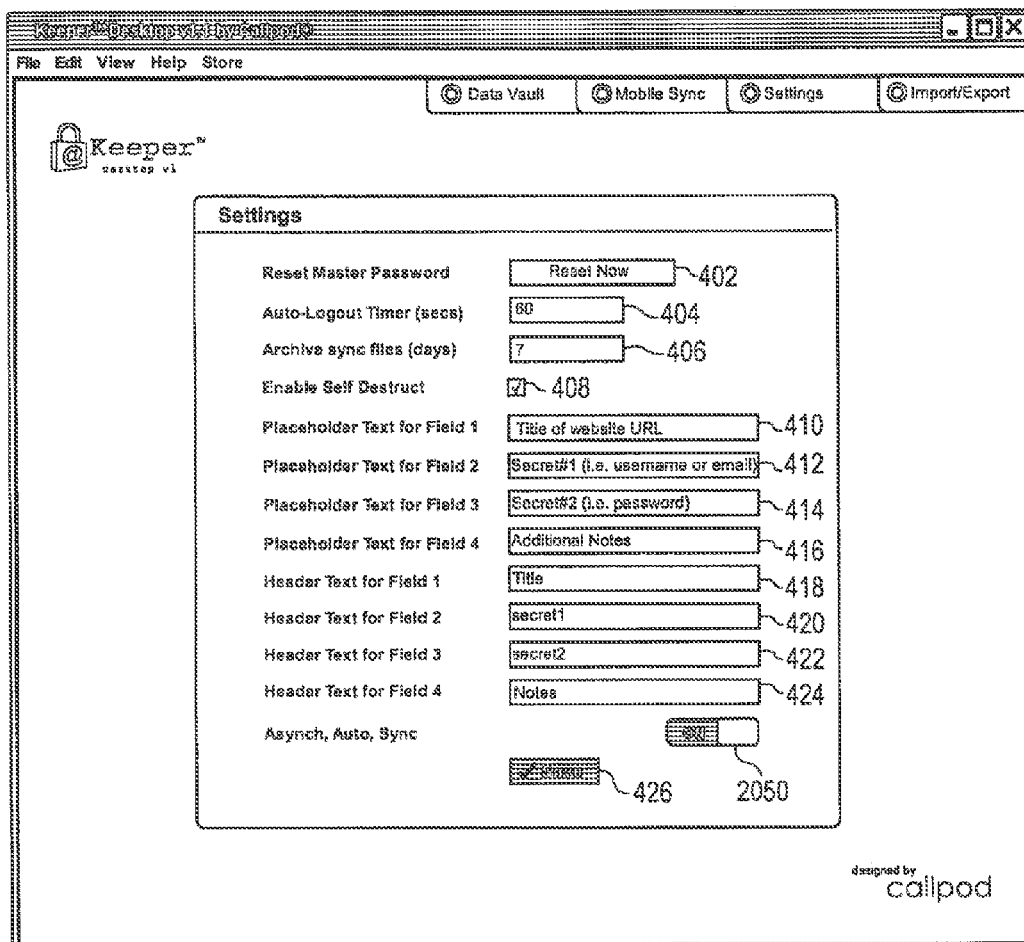
2034

Fig. 14C

Mobile device screen showing a login form. The screen displays a status bar at the top with icons for signal, Wi-Fi, and battery. Below the status bar is a login form. The form has a title "Specify Field" with a lock icon. Below the title are three text input fields: "Login:" with the value "arlene_lurey@yahoo.co...", "Password:" with the value "1234", and a button labeled "ignore".

2036

Fig. 15



400

Fig. 15A

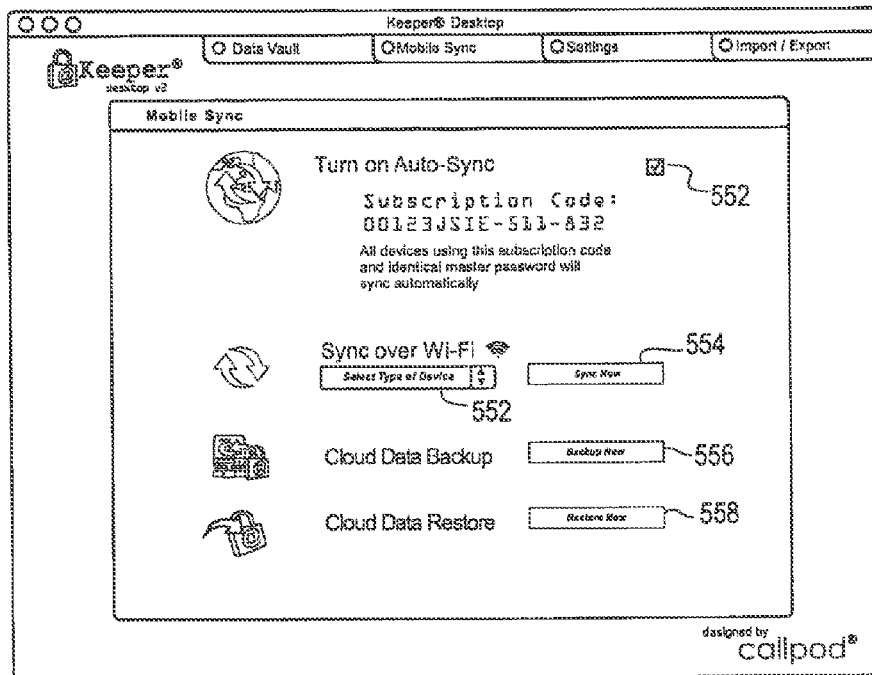


Fig. 15B

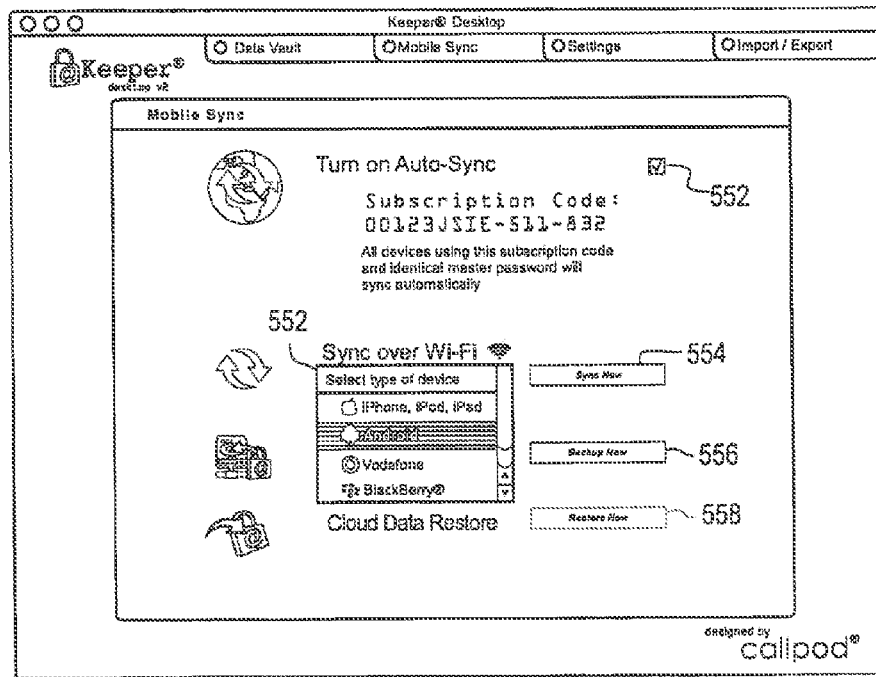


Fig. 15C

Backup

Title / Description

Security question

Answer

Re-Enter Answer

Enter your email address

Backup Now

560

Fig. 15D

Restore

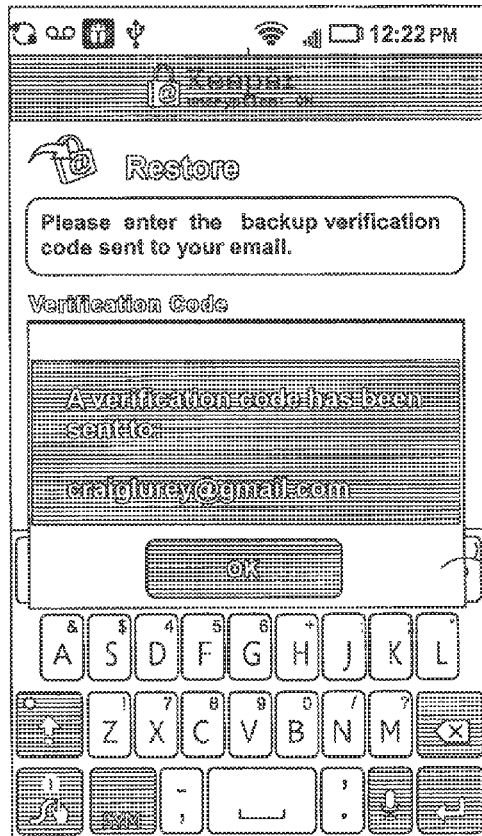
Restore a previously stored backup from Callpod's secure cloud. Please begin by entering your verification email used while creating your backup.

Email address used when creating backup

Sync Data

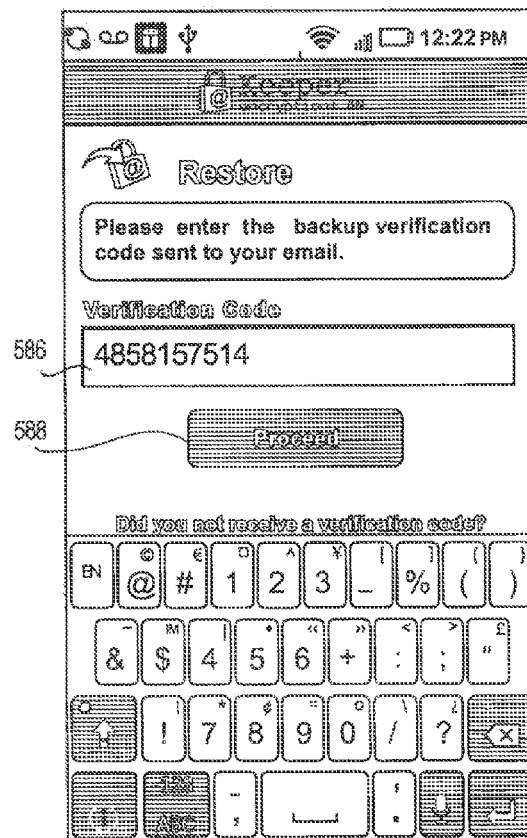
574

Fig. 15E



580

Fig. 15F



586

588

584

Fig. 15G

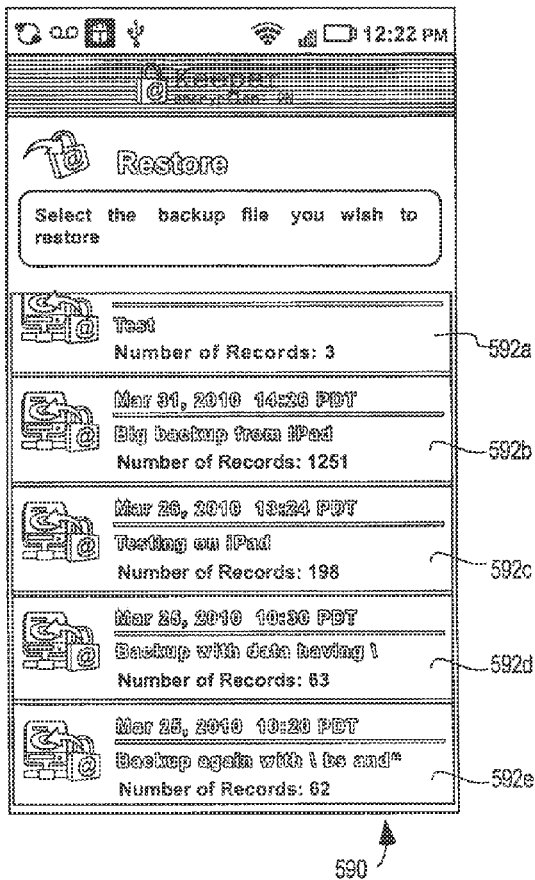
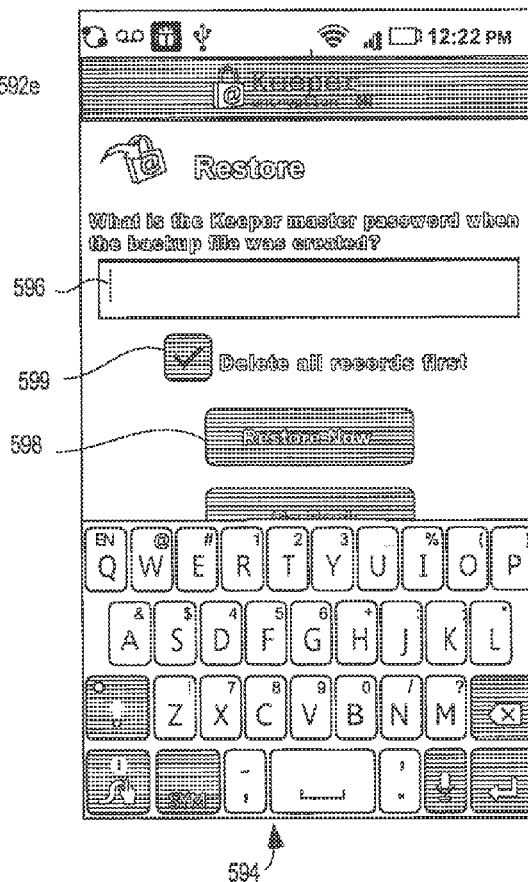


Fig. 15H



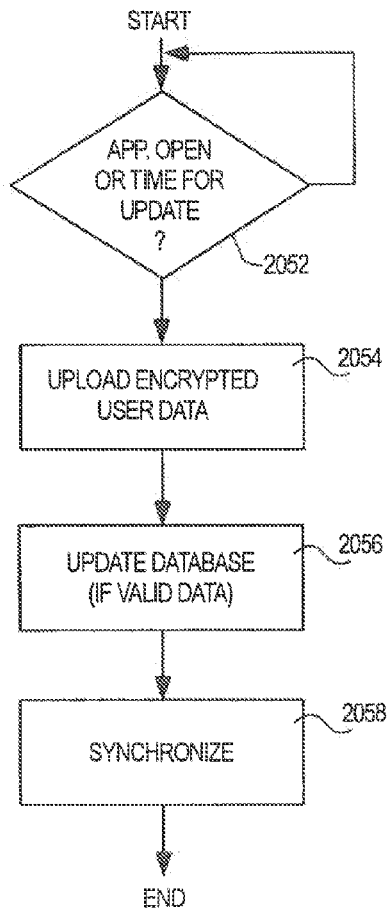
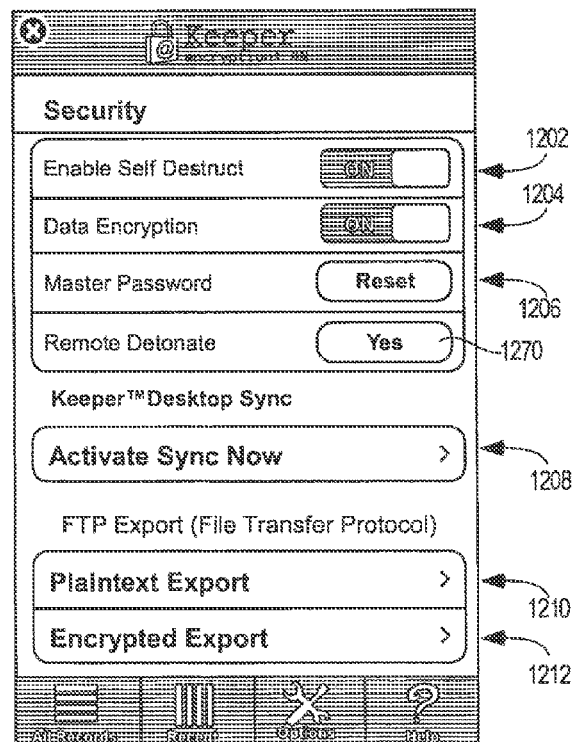


Fig. 16

Fig. 17



1200

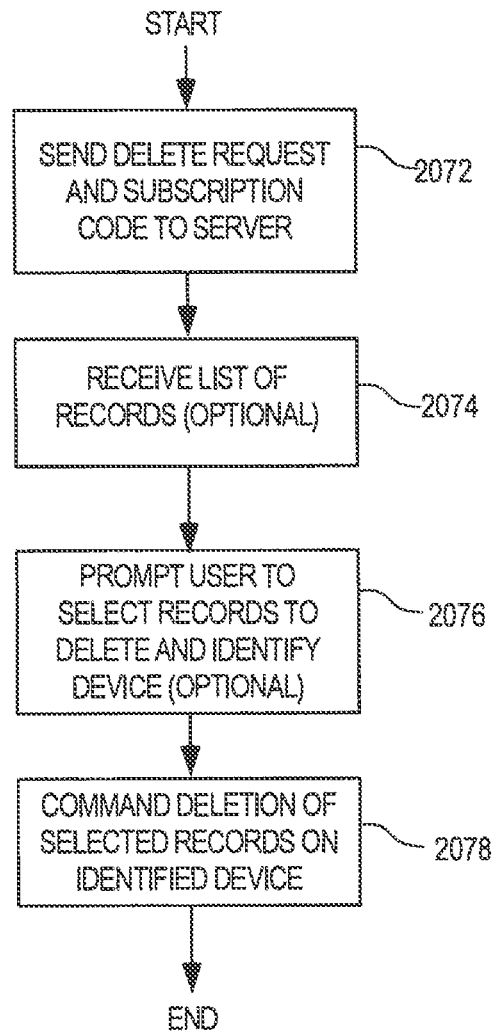
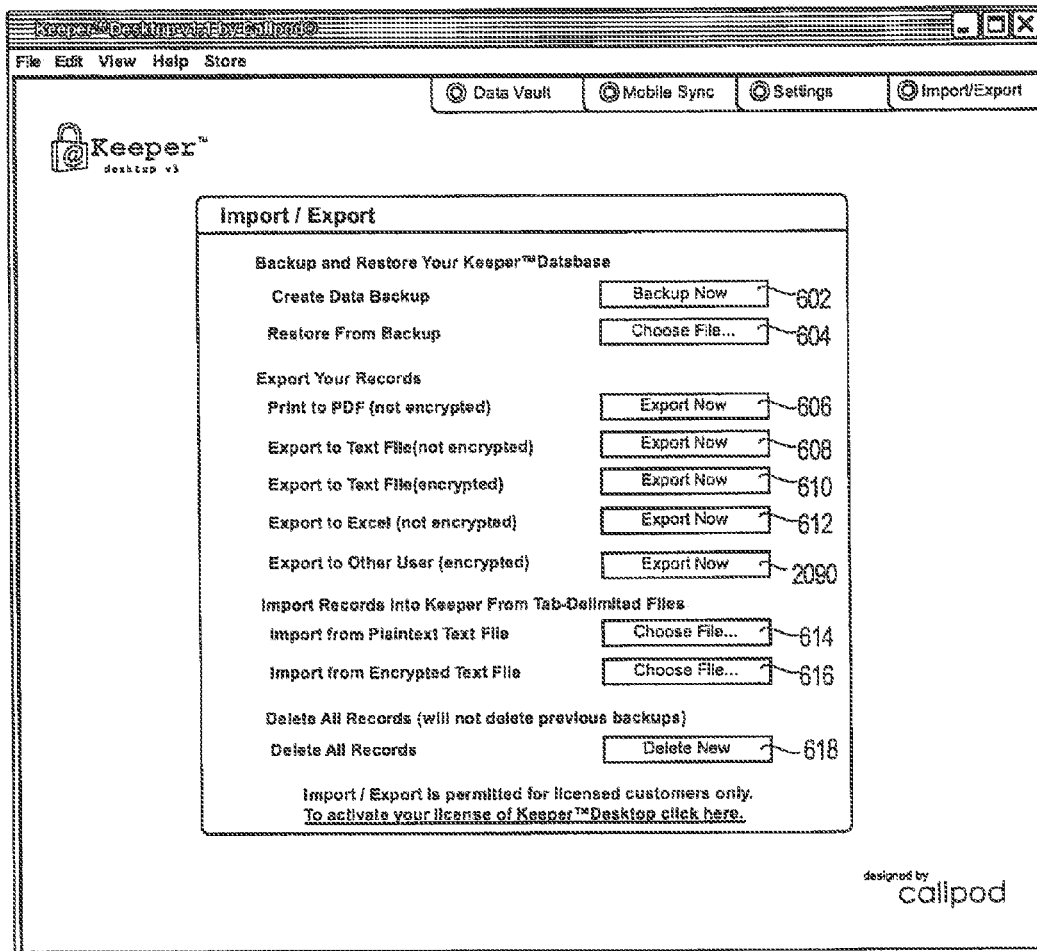
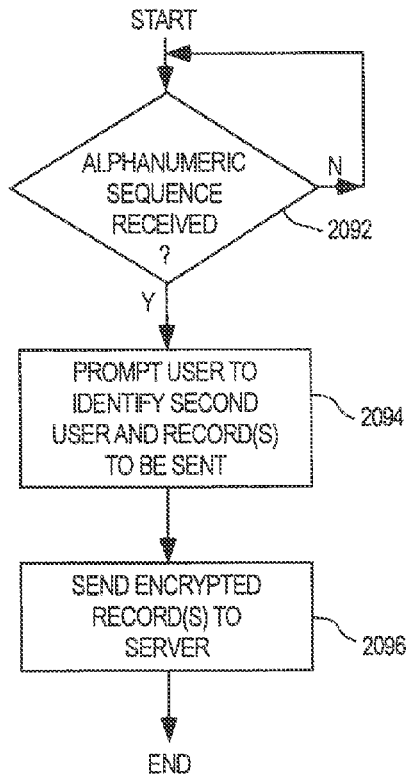
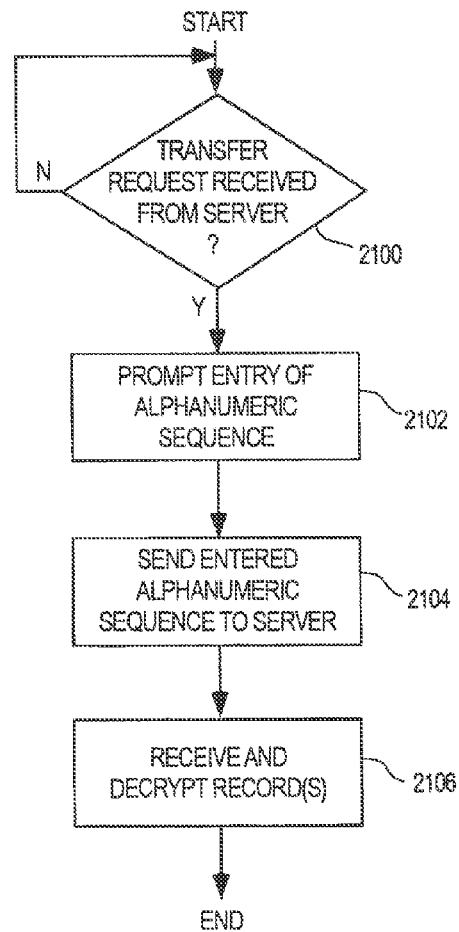
Fig. 18

Fig. 19



600

Fig. 20**Fig. 21**

1

APPARATUS FOR SELECTING AND DISPLAYING A FILE ASSOCIATED WITH A CURRENT GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a divisional of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/868,722 filed on Aug. 26, 2010, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/546,881 filed on Aug. 25, 2009. The entire contents of both of these applications are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

1. Field of the Invention

The field of the invention relates to portable electronic devices and more particularly to the security of information kept within portable devices.

2. Background of the Invention

Fraud prevention methods are well known. In the past, methods of fraud prevention were based upon a personal relationship among transaction partners. Merchants knew their customers and would not be fooled by someone else asking for access to customer accounts.

In today's environment, merchants and account managers do not personally know their customers. As such, access to accounts is typically based upon at least two levels of security. On the first level, a user is required to have some form of identification (e.g., a credit or debit card, an account number, etc.). The second level of security is usually a password.

The first level of security is often manifested in a hard-coded format (e.g., a plastic card) that could be lost or stolen. On the other hand, the second level of security (i.e., passwords) are often committed to memory. As long as a person's password is committed to memory, a lost or stolen credit card is useless.

However, many people often forget their passwords. As a consequence, some people will write their passwords down and carry the passwords with them in their purse or wallet. In this case, if the user loses their purse or wallet, then a thief may still be able to access the accounts of the account holder.

In order to counteract the problem of compromised passwords, many organizations will often request personal information from users (e.g., mother's maiden name, high school mascot, name of first employer, etc.). In addition, to requiring an account number and password, many organizations often request an item of personal information on a random basis.

While adding another level of security further increases security, the additional level further increases the difficulty in providing the information of the various levels of security, especially where the memory of a user is impaired. This problem is made worse when a user has accounts with many different organizations. Accordingly, a need exists for better methods of providing the information required for the various levels of security.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to one aspect of the present invention, an apparatus includes at least one storage device that stores a plurality of files wherein each file contains at least one item of confidential information and wherein a geographic location of use is associated with the file; a position comparison processor coupled to the at least one storage device that compares a current geographic location with each of the geographic locations of use associated with the plurality of files; and a display

2

coupled to the position comparison processor that displays contents of a selected file, wherein the geographic location of use associated with the selected file matches the current geographic location.

Other aspects of the inventions will be apparent upon review of the disclosure contained herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a password protection system 10 shown in a context of use generally in accordance with an illustrated embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 2 is a master password entry screen that may be used by the system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a title selection list screen of confidential information that may be displayed by the system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is confidential information for a title selected by a user from the screen of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a settings screen that may be selected by a user through the screens of FIG. 3 or 4;

FIG. 6 is a synchronization screen that may be selected by a user through the screens of FIGS. 3-5;

FIG. 7 is an Import/Export screen that may be selected by a user through the screens of FIGS. 3-6;

FIG. 8 is a master password entry screen of a portable device that may be used by the system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 9 is an introductory title list screen of a portable device that may be used with the system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 10 is a selection list screen of confidential information of a portable device that may be displayed by the system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 11 is an information screen of a portable device that may be selected through the screen of FIG. 10;

FIG. 12 is an edit screen that may be selected through the screen of FIG. 11; and

FIG. 13 is a synchronization screen that may be selected through the screens of FIGS. 9-12.

FIG. 14 is a flowchart illustrating optional programming executed by the password protection system 10 according to a further embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 14A-14C are screenshots of screens presented to a user associated with the programming of FIG. 14;

FIG. 15 is an alternative settings screen similar to FIG. 5 that permits selection of settings, including an asynchronous auto-sync function, for the system of FIG. 1;

FIGS. 15A-15H are screen shots of alternative screens presented to user for an alternative method of implementing synchronization and database backup routines;

FIG. 16 is a flowchart of programming executed by the system of FIG. 1 to implement the asynchronous auto-sync operation;

FIG. 17 is a synchronization screen similar to FIG. 13 that permits a user to request deletion of records on a lost or stolen device;

FIG. 18 is a flowchart of programming responsive to actuation of a softkey of FIG. 17 to delete selected records on a lost or stolen device;

FIG. 19 is an Import/Export screen similar to FIG. 7 that permits a user to request transmission of selected records to another user;

FIG. 20 is a flowchart of programming executed by the system of FIG. 1 in response to actuation of a softkey of FIG. 19 that transmits records to a second user; and

FIG. 21 is a flowchart of programming that may be executed by the system of FIG. 1 operating on a second user's device that permits the second user to receive records from the first user.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF AN
ILLUSTRATED EMBODIMENT

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a password protection system 10 shown within a context of use generally in accordance with an illustrated embodiment of the invention. The password protection system 10 may be used in conjunction with any of a number of portable electronic devices (e.g., an iPhone, FDA, portable computer, desktop computer etc.) 12 for convenient access to personal information in a safe, secure, portable environment.

Under the illustrated embodiment, a separate subject matter file may be created within the password protection system 10 for each unit of confidential information. For example, a first file may be provided for a VISA credit card, a second file may be provided for a MASTERCARD, a third file may be provided for bank or brokerage accounts, etc. Moreover, each file is not limited in the amount of information that may be used to define the unit of information.

Each file within the password protection system may be identified by a convenient title. In most cases, the title may be selected to be suggestive of the subject matter of the file. For example, a VISA file may be entitled "VISA."

Another file may be entitled "mortgages" as an indication of content. Within the file may be a name and account number of a mortgage holder. Alternatively, the content of the file may be a list of mortgage holders where a content of the list operate as pointers to other files that contain the specific account information of the mortgage holders in the list.

Moreover, the information contained within the password protection system 10 is intended to be automatically deleted upon the occurrence of any of a number of predetermined events. For example, entry of a sequence of incorrect passwords into the field intended for entry of a master password may cause deletion of all of the data within the password protection system 10 when the number of incorrect passwords in the sequence exceeds some predetermined value. Similarly, any attempt to copy the password protection system 10 or the encrypted files of the password protection system 10 may also automatically cause deletion.

Under another illustrated embodiment, the password protection system 10 may automatically offer information based upon geographic location. In this case, a user of the device 12 may mark certain geographic locations where certain units of confidential information are typically used. The next time that the user logs into the password protection system 10 at the marked location, the password protection system 10 automatically offers access to the marked information that corresponds to that geographic location.

The password protection system 10 may be used as an auxiliary application on any of a number of electronic devices 12 or as a single application on a stand-alone portable electronic device. For example, the password protection system 10 could be used as an application on an iPhone.

While the password protection system may have its greatest utility in small portable devices, the password protection system 10 may also be used in laptops and other desktop computer devices. For simplicity, the system 10 will first be described in the context of a laptop or desktop computer 12.

In order to access the system 10, an access icon 16 of the password protection system 10 may be provided on a display 14 of the device 12. Upon selection of the icon 16, a sign on or login screen 100 (FIG. 2) may be presented to the user. Included within the sign on screen may be an interactive window 102 for entry of a master password. As used herein, a master password is an alphanumeric string used for gaining global access to the password protection system 10.

The master password may be any length up to 32 characters or longer in some cases. Any combination of letters or numbers may be combined depending upon the level of security needed.

Once presented with the interactive window for the master password, a user may enter the master password and activate an ENTER or LOGIN softkey 104. In response, a password processor 18 may compare the entered password with a previously saved master password 20.

If the password entered through the master password window 102 matches the saved master password 20, then access is granted to the subject matter files 24, 26 of the password protection system 10. For example, the window 200 of FIG. 3 may be presented to the user showing a list of titles 202.

On the other hand, if the entered password does not match the saved master password 20, then the password processor 18 increments a master password sequence counter or count register 22. Each time the entered password matches the saved master password 20, the password processor 18 resets (i.e., enters a zero value into) the master password sequence count register 22.

After each incorrect master password, the password processor 18 compares the value within the sequence count register 22 with a threshold value (e.g., a value of 5) 30. If the value within the count register 22 exceeds the threshold value 30, then the password processor 18 may activate a deletion processor 28. The deletion processor automatically and completely deletes each of the subject matter files 24, 26.

It should be specifically noted that the password protection system 10 does not provide any method for recovering or resetting forgotten master passwords. Moreover, if an unauthorized party should attempt to guess a password or use some computer controlled algorithm to match the master password, the automatic deletion of the subject matter files will defeat such attempt after a very limited number of tries.

Information saved within the system 10 may be encrypted using a public key and military specified encryption algorithm. In this regard, the public key and encryption algorithm operate on substantially all of the data within the system 10. On a first level, the master password is encrypted using the public key and encryption algorithm. Passwords entered through the password window 102 are encrypted and compared with the previously encrypted master password 20 during login. On another level, the subject matter files 24, 26 are further encrypted using the encrypted master password 20.

In a preferred embodiment, the password protection system 10 is protected by a one-way encryption system that encrypts the files with the master password and creates a first cryptographic hash from the master password and stores the first cryptographic hash with the files. A cryptographic hash function, such as MD5, may be used. The master password itself is not stored within the password protection system 10, but rather the first cryptographic hash is stored with the password protection system 10. To open the password protection system 10, an entry password is entered from which a second cryptographic hash is created using the same cryptographic hash function. If the first cryptographic hash and the second cryptographic hash match, then the user is allowed access into, or opens, the password protection system 10 and the entered (master) password is used to decrypt the individual files. The entered password is used as a symmetric key to decrypt the individual files. If the first cryptographic hash and the second cryptographic hash do not match (i.e., identifying the entered password as incorrect), and a predefined number of incorrect entry passwords are entered in succession, then the password protection system 10 automatically deletes all of the files.

Once a user opens the password protection system **10**, the password processor decrypts the files **24, 26** and the user is presented with a navigation screen **200** containing the list of titles (alphanumeric sequences) **202** where each title corresponds to a respective file **24, 26**. Each title of the list **202** presented on the navigation screen **200** operates as an access softkey for accessing a corresponding respective file **24, 26**.

As opposed to scrolling through the list **202**, the user may also search the files **24, 26**. Included on the navigation screen may be an interactive window **204** for entering a search term. In this regard, the name and content of the files **24, 26** may be searchable. For example, if a user wishes to know if he/she has used the same term (e.g., title, password, etc.) for any other file, the user may enter the term, activate the ENTER button and the password system **10** will return an indication of any other files in which the term has been used.

Alternatively, the user may be provided with a “sort by” menu softkey **206**. In this case, if the user selects “Sort by Title” and enters a letter, then the system **10** will return an alphabetic list of files **24, 26** that have a title beginning with the entered letter. Alternatively, the user may sort by oldest or youngest file **24, 26**.

Associated with each of the files **24, 26** may be a number of information fields **208, 210, 212, 214** defined according to function. If the user wishes to retrieve a particular file **24, 26**, then the user may select the corresponding title (e.g., title **302** in FIG. 4) from the list **202**. Upon selection of the title **302**, the user is presented with the information within each of the fields **208, 210, 212, 214**.

In the example shown in FIG. 4, the user has selected the title “CitiBank” **302**. In this case, the file **24, 26** contains information regarding a bank account with CitiBank. The title “CitiBank” is shown in the first field **208**, the account number “xxxxx” is shown in the second field **210** as the first secret item, the password “yyyyy” is shown as the second secret item in the third field **212**.

Also shown in FIG. 4 is a fourth field **214** labeled “Notes.” Within the Notes field **214**, the user may enter any information used in conjunction with the account. In this case, the user may enter the answers to the personal questions asked by the bank in setting up the account. In this case, the answers to the personal questions may be used by the bank to confirm the identity of the user in any of a variety of different situations (e.g., on-line transactions, telephone requests, etc.).

In addition to retrieving information, the user can also easily modify the records **24, 26** within the system **10**. For example, if the user should want to change a password saved in the second field or window **212** of the screen **300**, then the user may activate an Edit softkey **306**. Once the Edit softkey **306** has been activated, the user can place a cursor over the information of the fields **208, 210, 212, 214** and enter changes.

Similarly, if the user should wish to create an entry for a new account (i.e., create a new file **24, 26**), the user may activate the New softkey **304**. Once the New softkey **304** is activated, the user can add files **24, 26** as necessary by typing a title into the first window **208** followed by additional information into the following windows **210, 212, 214**.

If the user should find that certain information has become outdated or may be replaced by other information, the user can delete the appropriate files **24, 26**. In this case, the user simply selects the title of a file **24, 26** and activates the Delete softkey **308**.

Similarly, the system **10** can be adapted to any of a number of different uses. For example, if the user should wish to change the user interface of the system **10**, then the user may activate the Settings softkey **220** (FIG. 3).

Upon activating the Settings softkey **220**, the user is presented with the settings screen **400** of FIG. 5. A first choice of the settings screen **400** is a Reset Master Password softkey **402**. The Reset softkey **402** resets the master password **20**.

In order to reset the master password **20**, the password processor **18** first decrypts each of the files **24, 26** using the old encrypted master password **20**. The password processor **1** then requires that the user enter a new master password a first and then a second time. If the two newly entered passwords match then the password processor first encrypts the new master password **20** and then re-encrypts each of the files **24, 26**.

Another choice on the setting screen **400** is a window **404** for entering a time delay controlling automatic logout. In this case, a timer within the system **10** is initiated each time the user logs in. When the timer reaches the time value shown in the window **404** (or reaches zero from a starting value equal to the time shown in the window **404**), the system **10** automatically logs the user out of the system **10**. The logout in this case may be set to a relatively short period of time to further protect the files **24, 26** by automatically requiring the user to re-enter the master password each time the time period **404** elapses.

Another choice on the settings screen **400** is a window **406** for specifying a time interval for backing up or otherwise archiving the files **24, 26** in a memory device. In this case, the specified time is in days. After the expiration of the time period specified in the window **406**, the user is prompted to synchronize the files **24, 26**.

Another choice on the settings screen **400** is a box **408** for enabling or disabling the automatic deletion of the files **24, 26**. If the box **408** is checked, then after a specified sequence of incorrect master passwords are entered, the files **24, 26** are automatically deleted. If the box **408** is not checked, then the system **10** will not delete the files **24, 26**. However, the system **10** will continue to deny access until the proper master password is entered.

Other choices include a number of windows **410, 412, 414, 416, 418, 420, 422, 424** that may be used in conjunction with the New softkey **304** and with the creation of new files **24, 26**. For example, boxes **418, 420, 422, 424** are used for entering the terms that will appear in the upper halves of fields **208, 210, 212, 214**. Boxes **410, 412, 414, 416** are used for entry of placeholder terms that are initially displayed in the lower halves of fields **208, 210, 212, 214** and that are replaced with the actual information entered by the user. For example, a first box **418** may be used for entry of header text (e.g., the word “title”) or other descriptive term in the upper portion of field **208** for each of the files **24, 26**. In the example, of FIG. 5, the placeholder for the header text entered through box **410** is descriptive of the format of the header text, including an identifier of a bank or credit account or the name of a website.

Similarly, a second box **420** and third box **422** may be used for entry of descriptive header text displayed in the top halves of the second and third fields **210, 212**, respectively, while boxes **412, 414** receive descriptive placeholder information of the format of user information that may be entered into the lower halves of the second and third fields **210, 212**. For example, box **420** may have the title of “secret 1” in the top half of field **210** while the placeholder entered through box **412** may be “Secret #1 (i.e., username or email).” Similarly, box **422** may have the title of “secret 2” in the top half of field **212** while the placeholder entered through box **414** may be “Secret #2 (i.e., password).” Box **424** may have the header text of “Notes” in the top half of field **214** while the placeholder entered through box **416** may be “Additional Notes.” The user may make whatever setting changes desired and activate a Save softkey **426** to save the desired settings.

If the user should select the Mobile Sync softkey **218** (FIG. 3), then the user may be presented with the screen **500** of FIG. 6. The Mobile Sync softkey **218** operates to synchronize data or otherwise exchange updates between the laptop **12** and mobile device **32**.

In order to synchronize data, the user first provides an appropriate software version of the system **10** to the mobile device **32** and connects the mobile device **32** to the same network as the laptop **12**. In this regard, the connection may be established via any appropriate medium (e.g., WiFi, USB cable, Bluetooth, etc.). In the example of FIG. 1, the laptop **12** is connected to the mobile device **32** via a WiFi connection **34**.

To initiate synchronization, the user activates Mobile Sync softkey **218** (if not already activated). From the screen **500**, the user may select the communication system via a Browse softkey **502**. In the example of FIG. 1, the user would select the WiFi connection **32**. Once the communication connection **34** has been selected, the user activates the Sync Now softkey **504** to synchronize files **24, 26** among devices **12, 32**.

In addition to synchronizing files **24, 26**, the user may also archive the files **24, 26**. In this case, the user may activate an Import/Export softkey **222** (FIG. 3). In response, the screen of FIG. 7 may be presented to the user.

If the user has not previously backed up the files, then the user may activate the Backup Now softkey **602**. In response, the user would be presented with a proposed path/file name for backup. The user may either activate an OK softkey or modify the proposed path/file name and then activate the OK softkey to complete the backup.

Alternatively, the user may restore a previous set of files **24, 26** by activating a Choose File softkey **604**. In response, the user may be presented with one or more previously created backup file(s). The user may select one of the files followed by activation of an OK softkey completing the restore operation.

The user may also export the files **24, 26** either in an encrypted or unencrypted format. For example, a user may export the files **24, 26** under an unencrypted pdf format by activating an Export Now softkey **606**, in response, the user would be presented with an interactive window for entry of a path/filename. The user may select a path, enter a file name and activate an OK softkey to complete exportation into the unencrypted pdf file.

Similarly, the user may export the files **24, 26** under an unencrypted text format by activating an Export Now softkey **608**. In response, the user would be presented with an interactive window for entry of a path/filename. The user may select a path, enter a file name and activate an OK softkey to complete exportation into the unencrypted text file.

Alternatively, the user may export the files **24, 26** under an encrypted text format by activating an Export Now softkey **610**. In response, the user would be presented with an interactive window for entry of a path/filename. The user may select a path, enter a file name and activate an OK softkey to complete exportation into the encrypted text file.

In another alternative, the user may export the files **24, 26** under an unencrypted Excel format by activating an Export Now softkey **612**. In response, the user would be presented with an interactive window for entry of a path/filename. The user may select a path, enter a file name and activate an OK softkey to complete exportation into the unencrypted Excel file.

The user may also import files from one or more tab-delimited text files having the appropriate format. In this case, the user may import from a plaintext text file by activating a Choose File softkey **614**. In response, the user would be

presented with a Browse softkey where the user would select the appropriate text file. The user may then activate an OK softkey to complete the importation.

The user may also import files from one or more text files having the appropriate encrypted format. In this case, the user may import from an encrypted plaintext text file by activating a Choose File softkey **616**. In response, the user would be presented with a Browse softkey where the user would select the appropriate encrypted text file. The user may then activate an OK softkey to complete the importation.

The user may also delete all files **24, 26** within the system **10** by activating the Delete Now softkey **618**. Activation of this softkey **618** will not affect previous backups of the files **24, 26**.

Under another illustrated embodiment, the system **10** includes (or accesses) a global positioning system (GPS) sensor **38**. Each time that the user opens a particular file **24, 26**, the GPS sensor **38** may determine a current global position (e.g., by street address, latitude and longitude, etc.) of the device **12, 32** and a global positioning processor **40** saves the global position within the file **24, 26**. If the file **24, 26** already contains a record of the current global position, then the global positioning processor may increment the number of times that the file **24, 26** has been opened at the current position. Alternatively, a user may activate a Mark Global Position softkey **44** to mark a particular location of use of the file **24, 26**.

The collection of geographic information may be very useful in some situations. For example, where a user enters a bank or stock broker's office, it is very likely that the user will need access to any files **24, 26** containing secret information related to one or more accounts the user has previously established with the bank or broker.

Operating in the background on the system **10** may be a position comparison processor **42** that determines a current global position of the system **10** each time that the user logs into the system **10** or periodically after login. A comparator within the position comparison processor **42** then looks for any marked files **24, 26** or compares the current global position with any global positions saved within each of the files **24, 26** to identify any files **24, 26** that are frequently used at the current geographic location. The position comparison processor **42** may do this by comparing the number of times that a file was opened at a current location with a threshold value used to eliminate random events. The position comparison processor **42** may then order any remaining files based upon which file **24, 26** was opened most frequently at the current location and proceed to present the ordered list to the user. The user may open the most frequently used file **24, 26**, scroll through the list or open none at all.

In general, the system **10** operates substantially the same on the mobile unit **32** as on the laptop or desktop device **12**. One exception is the graphical user interface (GUI) **14**. For example, where the system **10** is installed into an iPhone, the GUI **36** of the mobile unit **32** would appear somewhat different than when used on the laptop **12**.

For example, to access the system **10**, the user would activate the password protection system icon **16** on the mobile device **32**. In response, the login screen **700** of FIG. 8 would appear on the GUI **36** of the mobile device **32**.

Using the screen **700**, the user would log into the system **10**. For a master password including numbers, the user would activate the number softkey **704** for entering numbers. For letters, the user would activate the alphabetic softkey **702** and be presented with a full alphabetic keyboard instead of the number keyboard shown on screen **700**.

Upon the successful entry of a master password, the screen **800** of FIG. **9** would appear on the mobile device **32**. In order to access the records **24**, **26**, the user may activate an advance softkey **802**.

Upon activating the advance softkey **802**, the user may be presented with the screen **900** of FIG. **10** showing a list of titles **202**. If the user does not see the title that he/she wants, then the user may continue to activate the advance softkey **802**. Alternatively, the user may activate a most recently accessed softkey **904** to view a set of most recently displayed records **24**, **26**.

Alternatively, the user may select one of the titles (e.g., title **902** of FIG. **10**). Upon activating the title **902**, the user would be taken to the screen **1000** of FIG. **11**.

The user may review and use the information on the screen **1000** or may decide that the information needs to be updated. If the user desires to update the screen **1000**, then the user activates the Edit softkey **1002** and is taken to the screen **1100** of FIG. **12**.

On the screen **1100** of FIG. **12**, the user may place a cursor **1102** where ever desired and make corrections. Once the corrections are complete, the user may activate the Save softkey **1104**. Alternatively, the user may activate the Cancel softkey **1106** or Close softkey **1108** to cancel the corrections. If the user activates the Close softkey **1108**, then the system **10** would close and the user would be required to activate the system icon **16** to login and continue use of the system **10**.

If the user chooses to activate the Save softkey **1104** or Cancel softkey **1106**, then the user may be taken back to the title list of screen **900**. From the title list of screen **900**, the user may activate an Options softkey **906** and be presented with the tools screen **1200** of FIG. **13**.

On the tools screen **1200**, the user may activate the Enable Self Destruct softkey switch **1202** to enable the automatic deletion of records **24**, **26** upon the entry of a sequence of incorrect master password a predetermined number of times. Alternatively, the user may activate a Data Encryption softkey switch **1204** to encrypt the files **24**, **26** and master password saved on the mobile device **32**. The user may also activate a Master Password Reset softkey **1206** to reset the master password.

The user may also initiate a synchronization procedure through the Activate Sync Now softkey **1208**. The user may also specify the format of synchronization by selecting either a Plaintext Export softkey **1210** or a Encrypted Export softkey **1212**.

If the user activates the Activate Sync Now softkey **1208**, the user may be asked to activate a further softkey switch to confirm his/her desire to synchronize with the laptop **12**. If the user confirms, his/her desire to continue, then the mobile device presents an address for use with and entry into the laptop in order to facilitate synchronization. Once complete, the mobile device presents a screen to the user confirming the successful synchronization of the mobile device **32**.

In another embodiment of the invention, the password processor **18** may compare any entered password with a booby trap password **46**. The use of a booby trap password **46** may be useful in cases where the user of the system is under duress. For example, a user on a public street may be threatened with harm if the user does not provide a thief with the master password. In this case, the booby trap password **46** may be a password that instead of providing access to the files operates to immediately delete the files **20**, **26**.

As above, the booby trap password **46** may be encrypted using a public key and the booby trap password **46** and saved as an encrypted booby trap file **48**. Any entered password may be used to decrypt the file **48**. If the entered password suc-

cessfully decrypts the file **48**, the deletion processor **28** may be immediately activated to delete the files **24**, **26**.

In still another embodiment, the successful decryption of the booby trap file **50** may result in a series of steps intended to confound a threat. In this case, the successful decryption of the booby trap file **48** may cause a set of bogus information from a file **50** to be displayed on the screen including a set of bogus passwords or passwords that if used by the threat would immediately cause an alert to be sent to the authorities.

FIG. **14** illustrates programming that may be executed by the system **10** to implement an auto-fill function. When a user creates a password record using the system **10**, one of the fields that the user can fill in is called the "link" field. This link is a URL of the website for which the password was created. For example, it could be their banking website <http://www.bankofamerica.com>) or shopping site (such as <http://www.amazon.com>).

When the user views his/her password record, he/she is prompted with the ability to open the displayed link on a web browser of their device. When the browser opens, the system **10** scans the content of the pages as the user navigates. When the user selects a form field (e.g., a username, password, or email box) of the website's page, the system **10** prompts the user to indicate whether the system **10** should automatically fill in the field. The user is prompted with options of what to insert (i.e. username, password, email, or other field) and the user selects one of the proffered options. The system **10** fills in the form field in response to the selection. The user repeats this process until all the form fields are filled out satisfactorily and the user submits the form to the website, hence performing a login or other action.

The system **10** remembers which fields of the system database were utilized for which website fields. The next time the user launches the website from the system **10**, the system **10** auto-fills the information, thereby allowing the user to quickly log into the particular site. The user may also clear the mappings if the site has changed or new fields are required.

Referring to FIG. **14**, the programming begins at a block **2000** that prompts the user to select the link associated with the record that is currently being viewed. Once the user has selected the link, a block **2002** causes the browser to link to the selected URL. For example, a screen **2030** is presented to the user, which includes a soft key **2032** that, when selected, activates the block **2002**, which then causes the web site to be presented to the user on screen **2034**, as shown in FIG. **14B**. At this point the system **10** continues to run in the background although the web site is also shown on the screen **2034**. A block **2004** then determines whether data are available in the database of the system **10** to perform the auto-fill function. If such data are available, a block **2006** performs the auto-fill function whereby database entries are correspondingly loaded into website form fields, as shown in screenshot **2036** of FIG. **14C**. A block **2008** then checks to determine whether the auto-fill operation has resulted in a correct and completed website page. If this is not found to be the case, a block **2010** queries the user to determine whether the database entries associated with the site should be cleared from the database. If the user responds that the database data should be cleared from the system **10**, a block **2012** deletes the entries in the database record and control passes to a block **2014**. On the other hand, if the block **2010** determines that the user desires not to clear the data in the database, the block **2012** is skipped.

Following the block **2004** or the blocks **2010** or **2012**, the block **2014** checks to determine whether the user has selected a field on the website form. If this is not found to be the case, control pauses until a field is selected. Once this is detected, a block **2016** displays options for the field and prompts the user

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to select one of the options. Control then pauses at a block **2018** until the user selects one of the options for insertion. A block **2020** then fills the selected field with data representing the selected option. Thereafter, a block **2022** updates the system database with the selected option data and associates

such data with the form fields at which the data were inserted. Following the block **2022**, a block **2024** checks to determine whether the user has activated a data submission softkey requesting that the filled-in form be submitted to the website. Ordinarily, this action would not be requested until all form fields have been filled in successfully. If the user has not pressed the submission softkey, control returns to the block **2014** where the user can select a new form field. On the other hand, if the user has pressed the submission softkey, the data in the form fields are submitted to the website. A block **2026** thereafter checks to determine whether the website has accepted the filled-in webpage. If this is not found to be the case, control returns to the block **2014** so that the user may enter more data. If the filled-in webpage has been accepted by the website, this portion of the programming terminates.

FIG. 15 illustrates an alternative settings screen that can permit a user to select or deselect an asynchronous auto synchronization function. In general, a user requires his/her password information to be available and accessible on any computer or mobile device that he/she utilizes. The information must be kept up-to-date and in sync whenever the user changes or adds new information on any device. When a user signs up with the system **10**, the user is provided a "subscription code," which is a unique alphanumeric sequence that only applies to the user. This code is typed into each location that the software is installed along with a device id that uniquely identifies each device on which the system **10** is installed. When validated by the activation server, this information uniquely defines a user and a device.

The process of automatically synchronizing the user's password information should be kept simple and easy, and therefore, there should not be any configuration or complex device authentication.

An on/off switch **2050**, seen in FIG. 15, is optionally provided to the user on the Settings screen of the application. This switch, when turned ON, will cause the application to contact a database of a central server where an encrypted copy of the user's data is uploaded upon every instance of the application opening, or on a periodicity defined by the user. The data are encrypted utilizing the user's master password and subscription code as the cipher. Using this cipher ensures that a brute force attack on the data is not feasible.

When the data are uploaded to the central server, a synchronization operation is performed on the server side, based on the previously uploaded data having the same subscription code and cipher keys (if such data exists). The resulting database is then downloaded by the user's application and overrides the user's current database. By maintaining a copy of the most recently merged database on the server side, the user is able to perform asynchronous auto-sync of his/her information across mobile devices and computer(s).

It should be noted that a synchronization operation can not take place if the subscription code and master password do not form a cipher that properly decrypts the data.

In another embodiment of such a server-based system, synchronization and data backup routines may also be accessed with a screen **550** shown in FIGS. 15A and 15B may be presented to the user as an alternative to the screen **400** shown in FIG. 15 or the screen **500** in FIG. 6.

In this embodiment, any one of the electronic devices may automatically synch with the other electronic devices via the remote server. An on/off check box **552** is displayed on the

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screen **550**, wherein if the checkbox is selected "on," then the system will automatically synchronize the data stored on each electronic device connected to the remote server when a given event occurs. For example, the auto synchronization may be set to occur any time new data is entered into a database and any time existing data is modified on a database on any one of the electronic devices, and/or whenever the system **10** is accessed. Thereby, if a file record **24**, **26** is created or altered on one electronic device, then that electronic device will send the new/altered information to the server, which will in turn relay the new/altered information to some or all of the other electronic devices.

The electronic devices may also be synchronized manually over a local area network, such as a local wi-fi network. Manual synchronization may be initiated with a dropdown menu **652** associated with a softkey **654** for accessing a synchronization routine. As shown in FIG. 15B, the dropdown menu presents a list of choices of what type of device the user wishes to synchronize with. For example, the user may choose to synchronize with an Android-type of smart phone as shown in FIG. 15B. Of the user could choose other types of electronic devices depending upon what types of devices with which he or she needs to synchronize. Additionally, manual synchronization may optionally be directed to a particular one of several different electronic devices, in which case an additional data entry feature may be provided to the user to provide identifying information for which of the several electronic devices he or she wants to synchronize. After the device has been selected and/or identified, the user selects the softkey **554** to initiate a synchronization routine over the LAN.

Such a server-based system may also include data backup and restore features that backup to and restore from the remote server, wherein file records **24**, **26** on an electronic device are backed up by copying the file records to memory on the remote server and such backed-up file records may be restored to any one of the electronic devices. Such back-up and restore functionality to a remote server may be called cloud data backup and cloud data restore. A softkey **556** initiates a cloud backup routine, and a softkey **558** initiates a cloud restoration routine.

Upon selecting the softkey **556**, a screen **560** (FIG. 15C) is presented to the user. The user enters a title for a backup file to be created in a data entry box **562**, such as "phone." The user selects a security question from a dropdown box **564**. For example, the security question may be "what is the current keeper master password?" The user enters the answer to the security question in a data entry box **566**, and re-enters the answer in the data entry box **568** for confirmation. The user also enters his or her email address in the data entry box **570**. Thereafter, the user selects a softkey **572** to initiate the cloud backup routine, which creates and stores an encrypted backup file on the remote server under the title entered by the user in the data entry box **562**. The backup file is encrypted utilizing a cipher based on the email address, the security question, and the security answer entered by the user. This prevents unauthorized access to the backup file by anyone.

To restore data to one of the electronic devices from the remote server, the user initiates the cloud data restore routine by selecting softkey **558**, whereupon a screen **574** (FIG. 15D) is presented to the user. The user enters the same email address in the data entry box **576** that was previously entered in the data entry box **570** when creating the backup file. The user then activates softkey **578**. If the email address entered in the data entry box **576** matches the email address entered in the data entry box **570**, then the remote server sends a verification code to the email address, which is reported to the user in screen **580** (FIG. 15E). If the email addresses entered in

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data entry boxes **570** and **576** do not match, no verification code is sent. The user then selects an acknowledgment softkey **582**, and a screen **584** (FIG. **15F**) is presented to the user. The user retrieves the verification code from his or her email account and then enters the verification code into a data entry box and submits the verification code to the remote server by activating softkey **588**. If the verification code entered into data entry box **586** matches the verification code sent by the remote server, then a screen **590** (FIG. **15G**) is presented to the user, which shows a list of backup files associated with the user **592a**, **592b**, **592c**, **592d**, **592e**. The user selects the backup file he or she wishes to restore to the electronic device and a screen **594** (FIG. **15I**) is presented, which presents to the user the security question selected at dropdown menu **564** selected when creating the backup file **592a**, **592h**, etc. selected. The user enters the answer to the question in a data entry box **596** and sends the answer to the remote server by selecting the softkey **598**. If the email entered in the data entry box **576**, the verification code entered in the data entry box **586**, and the answer entered into the data entry box **596** all match the corresponding prior data, then the remote server creates a decryption key, which is used to decrypt the backup file, and transmits the decrypted backup file to the electronic device over a secure communication channel. The backup file is then written to the electronic device, and then re-encrypted on the portable electronic device with the master password. The user may optionally choose to delete all records **24**, **26** already on the electronic device before the backup file is written to the electronic device by selecting an on/off box **599**.

Referring next to FIG. **16**, the programming to implement the asynchronous auto synchronization begins at a block **2052**, which checks to determine whether the application has been newly opened or, optionally, whether a particular time has elapsed from the last synchronization operation. If neither event has occurred, control pauses at the block **2052**; otherwise, control passes to a block **2054** that uploads the encrypted user data to the central server. The server checks the uploaded data to determine if such data are valid and, if so, the fields of the database maintained on the central server are updated for the particular records where data has changed since the last synchronization operation. A block **2058** then synchronizes remaining devices associated with the particular user.

Referring next to FIG. **17**, in the case of device theft or a lost device, or if the user operating the device is not authorized to have the information stored in his/her application, the owner of the application (and also the owner of the "subscription code") has the ability to issue a remote detonation of the mobile database or individual records stored in that database. When the application begins execution, a request is sent to the central server together with the active subscription code. If a remote detonation of data is requested by actuating a softkey **2070**, the server will respond with the command to "detonate" and optionally provide a list of records to delete. The application will automatically perform this detonation upon request.

More specifically, once the remote detonate softkey **2070** has been actuated, the software of FIG. **18** is executed by the system **10** (here shown as being initiated from the mobile device). The software begins at a block **2072**, which sends the detonation request and subscription code and device ID to the central server, (Note—see the question above regarding the device ID) Following the block **2072**, a block **2074** may receive an optional list of all records that may be marked for deletion on the lost or stolen device. A further block **2076** may optionally prompt the user to select records to delete and may

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further prompt the user to identify the device that has been lost or stolen, if such device has not been previously identified at the block **2072**. A block **2078** then commands the deletion of selected records on the identified device via the central server.

Referring next to FIG. **19**, in order to share password records between users, for example, between husband and wife or employees at a company, a mechanism for transmitting this password data in a secure and timely fashion is required. Additionally, in order for this feature to be used without burden, the feature needs to be simple and easy to use with minimal clicks. This may be accomplished, for example, by actuating a softkey **2090** in the Import/Export screen of the application that permits a first user to request the transmission of a record. The central server provides the user with a unique alphanumeric sequence of sufficient character length and a number of seconds for which the sequence will be valid (e.g., 60 seconds). Referring also to FIG. **20**, programming executed by the application running on the first user's device begins at a block **2092**, which awaits receipt of a unique alphanumeric sequence from the central server. Once this sequence is received, a block **2094** prompts the first user to identify a second user and record(s) to be sent to the second user. A block **2096** then encrypts the information to be sent with a cipher generated from the unique sequence and transmits the encrypted data to the central server.

The first user provides the unique alphanumeric sequence to the second user via telephone or text message. Referring to FIG. **21**, which illustrates programming executed by the application running on the second user's device, a block **2100** checks to determine whether a transfer request has been received from the central server. Once this occurs, a block **2102** prompts the second user to type in the unique alphanumeric sequence or accept the text message (SMS) into the second user's application, which enters the sequence on behalf of the second user. The sequence is then transmitted to the central server by a block **2104**. Thus, the application on the second user's device requests access from the central server to any information associated with the given sequence. If the information is found, and if the second user has requested the information within the time period allocated, the information is delivered to the second user in encrypted format. A block **2106** decrypts the record with the key as the cipher.

This method protects from brute force attack in addition to the cipher strength of the encryption/decryption algorithm chosen.

A specific embodiment of method and apparatus for protecting confidential information has been described for the purpose of illustrating the manner in which the invention is made and used. It should be understood that the implementation of other variations and modifications of the invention and its various aspects will be apparent to one skilled in the art, and that the invention is not limited by the specific embodiments described. Therefore, it is contemplated to cover the present invention and any and all modifications, variations, or equivalents that fall within the true spirit and scope of the basic underlying principles disclosed and claimed herein.

We claim:

1. An apparatus, comprising:

at least one storage device that stores a plurality of files, wherein each file contains at least one item of confidential information, and wherein a geographic location of use is associated with the file;

a position comparison processor coupled to the at least one storage device that compares a current geographic loca-

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tion with each of the geographic locations of use associated with the plurality of files, wherein for each file the position comparison processor is configured to associate the geographical location of use to the file once a tracked frequency of selecting the file at the geographical location matches a predetermined threshold value; and
 a display coupled to the position comparison processor that displays contents of a selected file, wherein the geographic location of use associated with the selected file matches the current geographic location.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a name of one of the plurality of files represents a name of a credit provider, the one of the plurality of files includes data representing an account number, and the items of confidential information of at least some of the plurality of files comprise passwords.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is incorporated in a portable electronic device.

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4. The apparatus of claim 3, further comprising a password protection system for password protecting the plurality of files.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the password protection system comprises a password processor for detecting entry of passwords into a master password entry field.

6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the password processor compares entered passwords from the master password entry field with a master password to identify incorrect master passwords.

7. The apparatus of claim 6, further comprising a deletion processor for deleting the plurality of files upon successive entry of incorrect master passwords a predetermined number of times.

8. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the password protection system comprises a cryptographic hash function.

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